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(54) **SYNTHETIC PEPTIDE FOR INHIBITING
EXPRESSION OF TYPE 2 TNF RECEPTOR
AND USE THEREOF**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

None

See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

This invention provides an artificially synthesized peptide
having an activity to inhibit the expression of type 2 TNF
receptor (TNF-R2), and a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting
composition including the peptide as an active ingredient.
Also provided is a method for inhibiting the expression of
TNF-R2 in cells capable of expressing TNF-R2, by using the
peptide. The expression of TNF-R2 in the cells is inhibited,
by supplying the cells capable of expressing TNF-R2 with a
synthetic peptide essentially including of an amino acid
sequence constituting a signal peptide in an amyloid pre-
cursor protein (APP) or an amino acid sequence formed by
substituting, deleting and/or adding one or several amino
acid residues in/from/to the amino acid sequence of the
signal peptide.

6 Claims, 1 Drawing Sheet

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Fig. 1

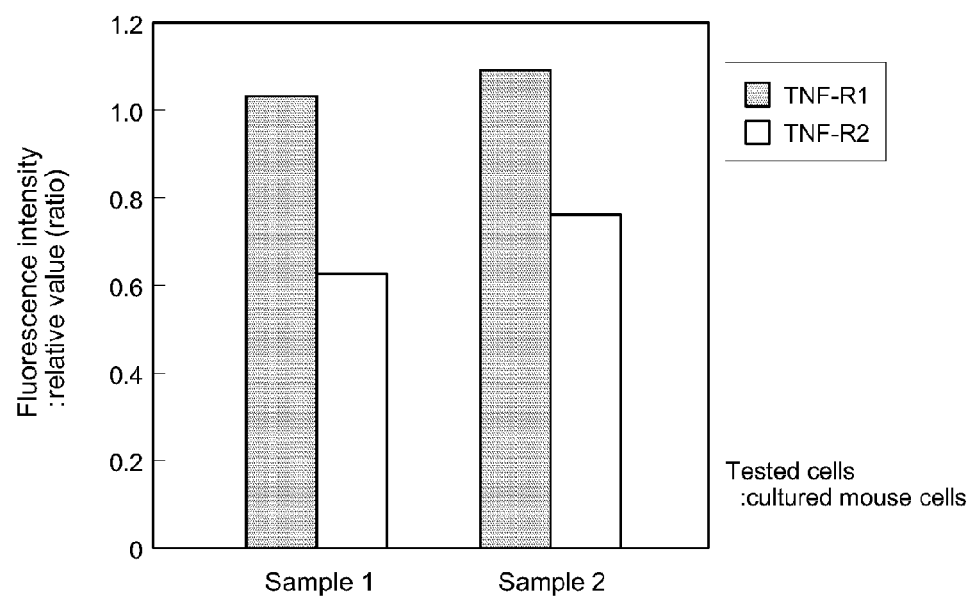
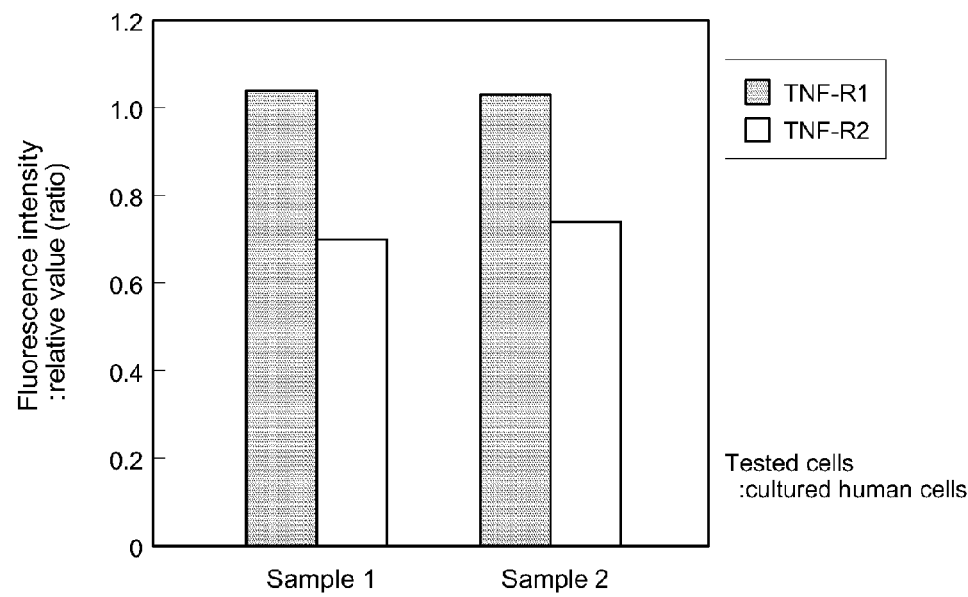


Fig. 2



SYNTHETIC PEPTIDE FOR INHIBITING EXPRESSION OF TYPE 2 TNF RECEPTOR AND USE THEREOF

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a synthetic peptide capable of selectively inhibiting the expression of type 2 TNF receptor in target cells. In particular, it relates to a type 2 TNF receptor expression-inhibiting composition comprising the peptide as an active ingredient and a method for inhibiting the expression of type 2 TNF receptor, using the peptide (the composition).

The present application claims priority based on Japanese Patent Application No. 2012-231148 filed on Oct. 18, 2012, and its entire contents are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND ART

Tumor necrosis factors generally called TNF (typically three types, namely TNF- α , TNF- β (LT- α), LT- β) are cytokines that are produced primarily in immune system cells. TNF- α being representative thereof is produced mainly in macrophages and shows various physiological activities such as small thrombi formation and apoptosis induction, etc. Excessive production (expression) of TNF- α is known to bring on diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and the like.

As for the receptors to which such TNF binds, there are a type 1 TNF receptor (tumor necrosis factor receptor 1 or "TNF-R1" hereinafter) having a molecular weight of about 55 kDa and a type 2 TNF receptor (tumor necrosis factor receptor 2 or "TNF-R2" hereinafter) having a molecular weight of about 75 kDa.

These two types of TNF receptor are known to give rise to different, individual physiological effects. It is reported, for instance, that in a test with TNF-R1 knockout mice and TNF-R2 knockout mice, arteriogenesis of the upper limb and angiogenesis of the lower limb are enhanced in TNF-R1 knockout mice, but are impaired in TNF-R2 knockout mice (Non-Patent Document 1).

In the meantime, while glaucoma is the top cause for the loss of eyesight in our country and is becoming a serious problem in the aging society, it has been reported that the progress of glaucoma is slower in TNF-R2 knockout mice than in wild-type mice (oral presentation by S. McKinnon et al., "Neuroinflammation in Glaucoma" at XIX Biennial Meeting of the International Society for EYE RESEARCH, Jul. 18-23, 2010).

It is also reported that photoreceptor degeneration induced by retinal detachment is mediated by TNF- α acting via TNF-R2, but not much affected by TNF-R1 deficiency (Non-Patent Document 2).

CITATION LIST

Non-Patent Literature

[Non-Patent Document 1] American Journal of Pathology, vol. 169(5), 2006, pp. 1886-1898

[Non-Patent Document 2] Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science, vol. 52(3), 2011, pp. 1384-1391

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

As described above, while both being TNF receptors, TNF-R1 and TNF-R2 individually induce different physiological activities. In other words, it suggests that a TNF

(e.g. TNF- α) mediates different physiological effects when the TNF binds to TNF-R1 and when it binds to TNF-R2.

This suggests that, for instance, if the expression of TNF-R2 can be reduced in a target organ, tissue or site (or more microscopically, in cells present in the organ, tissue or site) to modify (decrease) the relative presence of TNF-R2 compared to TNF-R1, it will be possible to disable (or inhibit) the manifestation of an undesirable physiological effect that would occur due to excessive expression of TNF-R2 in the organ, tissue or site.

For instance, as in the reported examples, with respect to retinal diseases such as glaucoma, retinal detachment, etc., by means of adjusting the proportions of the presence (expression) of TNF receptors present in retinal photoreceptor cells or ganglion cells to a lower relative presence (expression) of TNF-R2 than usual, apoptosis of the photoreceptor cells or ganglion cells can be inhibited.

However, there has hitherto been no method or drug for inhibiting TNF-R2 expression in TNF-R2-expressing cells thereby to reduce the relative presence of TNF-R2 compared to TNF-R1 present in the cell membrane, easily and highly efficiently.

The present invention has been thus made to provide a method for inhibiting the expression of TNF-R2 in at least one species of cells present in a desired organ, tissue or site, in vivo or in vitro, a synthetic peptide used in the method, and a composition (drug composition) comprising the peptide.

To achieve the objectives, the present invention provides a composition described below. In particular, the composition disclosed herein is for inhibiting the expression of TNF-R2 in cells capable of expressing type 2 TNF receptor (TNF-R2). The composition comprises a synthetic peptide essentially consisting of an amino acid sequence constituting an amyloid precursor protein (APP) signal peptide (or abbreviated to "APP signal sequence" hereinafter) or an amino acid sequence formed by substituting, deleting and/or adding one or several amino acid residues in/from/to the amino acid sequence of the signal peptide (or abbreviated to "modified APP signal sequence" hereinafter), and further comprises a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Herein, the term "cells capable of expressing TNF-R2" refers to cells in which constant or temporary expression of TNF-R2 is observed in vivo or in vitro. For example, immune system cells and nervous system cells of humans and other mammals are typical examples of the cells referred to herein as being capable of expressing TNF-R2, that is, an approximately 75 kDa TNF receptor which includes no death domain and thus is clearly distinct from TNF-R1.

The present inventors closely studied the characteristics of amyloid precursor protein which is perceived as the causative substance of Alzheimer's disease in the amyloid hypothesis of Alzheimer's disease and took notice of the signal peptide of amyloid precursor peptide. The hypothesis suggests that amyloid precursor protein (APP) is cleaved by a secretase in neurons of the brain to produce an amyloid β protein typically formed of 40 or 42 amino acid residues, and aggregation (accumulation) of the amyloid β in the brain destroys neurons, resulting in the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

The present inventors have come to complete this invention upon their discovery that when various TNF-R2-expressing cells (cultured cells) are supplied with a synthetic peptide consisting of an APP signal sequence or a modified APP signal sequence, the expression of TNF-R2 can be inhibited.

In other words, by supplying, to certain target cells capable of expressing TNF-R2, the "TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide" which is the primary ingredient of the composition disclosed herein, or more specifically a synthetic peptide essentially consisting of an amino acid sequence constituting an amyloid precursor protein (APP) signal peptide or an amino acid sequence formed by substituting, deleting and/or adding one or several (typically two or three) amino acid residues in/from/to the amino acid sequence of the signal peptide (e.g. by supplying the composition or peptide according to the present invention to a culture medium in which the certain target cells capable of expressing TNF-R2 are being cultured), the expression of TNF-R2 can be inhibited in the cells supplied with the synthetic peptide.

By the use of the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting composition (TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide) disclosed herein, the TNF-R2 expression (i.e. its presence) in the target cells can be reduced. Thus, the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting composition (TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide) disclosed herein can contribute to treat or improve various TNF-mediated diseases and lesions, which are influenced by the expression (presence) of TNF-R2 or by the relative presence of TNF-R2 compared to TNF-R1. For instance, by reducing the expression (presence) of TNF-R2 in retinal photoreceptor cells or ganglion cells, apoptosis of the cells can be inhibited.

The TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting composition (TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide) disclosed herein can be preferably used in research and development in fields (e.g. fields related to medicine, pharmacology, genetics, biochemistry, biology; the same applies hereinafter) aimed to improve diseases (disorders) mediated by TNF-R2.

The present invention also provides a method for inhibiting the expression of TNF-R2, the method characterized by the use of a synthetic peptide (TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide) disclosed herein.

In other words, a method is provided for inhibiting the expression of TNF-R2 in cells capable of expressing TNF-R2, the method characterized by supplying the cells with a synthetic peptide essentially consisting of an amino acid sequence constituting an amyloid precursor protein (APP) signal peptide or an amino acid sequence formed by substituting, deleting and/or adding one or several amino acid residues in/from/to the amino acid sequence of the signal peptide.

According to such a method, in vivo or in vitro, the presence (expression) of TNF-R2 can be reduced in at least one species of cells that are present in a prescribed organ, tissue or site and are capable of expressing TNF-R2.

Thus, according to the present invention, by using a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting composition (i.e. TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide) disclosed herein, cells having a reduced presence of TNF-R2 can be produced. In other words, the present invention provides a method for producing cells having a reduced presence of TNF-R2, the method characterized by the use of the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting composition (TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide) disclosed herein.

In implementing the present invention, the amino acid sequence of the amyloid precursor protein (APP) signal peptide is preferably one of the following:

MLPGLALLLLAAWTARA (SEQ ID NO: 1)

MLPGLALLLLAAWTARA

MLPSLALLLLAAWTVRA (SEQ ID NO: 2)

MLPSLALLLLAAWTVRA

-continued

MLPGLALVLLAAWTARA (SEQ ID NO: 3)

MLPSLALLLLLTWTARA (SEQ ID NO: 4)

By using the signal peptide of human (SEQ ID NO: 1), mouse (SEQ ID NO: 2), pig (SEQ ID NO: 3), guinea pig (SEQ ID NO: 4) origin or a modified APP signal sequence thereof, the expression of TNF-R2 can be inhibited in the target cells. The synthetic peptide used in practicing the present invention is preferably a chemically synthesized peptide having a total of 25 or fewer amino acid residues.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows a graph plotting the presence of TNF-R2 relative to the presence of TNF-R1 in cultured cells of mouse origin based on immunofluorescence assays using an anti-TNF-R1 polyclonal antibody and an anti-TNF-R2 polyclonal antibody (primary antibodies) along with a fluorescent dye-labeled secondary antibody.

FIG. 2 shows a graph plotting the presence of TNF-R2 relative to the presence of TNF-R1 in cultured cells of human origin based on immunofluorescence assays using an anti-TNF-R1 polyclonal antibody and an anti-TNF-R2 polyclonal antibody (primary antibodies) along with a fluorescent dye-labeled secondary antibody.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments of the present invention are described below. Note that technical matters other than the matters particularly mentioned in the present description (e.g. the primary structure and chain length of a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein) which are required for carrying out the present invention (e.g., general matters relating to chemical peptide synthesis, cell cultivation, and preparation of a pharmaceutical composition containing a peptide) are matters of design variation that could be apprehended by a person skilled in the art based on conventional art in such fields as cell engineering, physiology, medicine, pharmacology, organic chemistry, biochemistry, genetic engineering, protein engineering, molecular biology, genetics, and the like. The present invention can be practiced based on the technical details disclosed in the present description and common general technical knowledge in the pertinent fields. In the following description, amino acids are indicated by single-letter designations (in sequence listings, by three-letter designations) in accordance with the nomenclature for amino acids set forth in the IUPAC-IUB guidelines.

The present description incorporates by reference the entire contents of all the documents cited herein.

In the present description, the term "synthetic peptide" refers to a peptide fragment that is manufactured by artificial chemical synthesis or biosynthesis (i.e. genetic engineering-based production) and can stably exist in a certain composition (e.g., a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting composition).

In this description, the term "peptide" refers to an amino acid polymer having a plurality of peptide bonds, and is not limited by the number of amino acid residues included in the peptide chain, with the term typically referring to one having a relatively small molecular weight with a total of 50 or fewer (e.g. 25 or fewer, especially 20 or fewer) amino acid residues.

In this description, unless otherwise specified, the term “amino acid residue” includes the N-terminal amino acid and the C-terminal amino acid of a peptide chain.

In this description, the term “modified APP signal sequence” refers to an amino acid sequence formed by substituting, deleting and/or adding (inserting) one or several (e.g. two or three) amino acid residues in a selected APP signal sequence without impairing its function (i.e. the ability to inhibit the expression of TNF-R2). Typical examples of the modified APP signal sequence referred to in the present description include a sequence generated by conservative amino acid replacement in an APP signal sequence disclosed herein, where one or several (typically two or three) amino acid residues are conservatively substituted (e.g. a hydrophobic amino acid residue is substituted with a different hydrophobic amino acid residue, e.g. mutual substitution between a leucine residue and a valine residue; a neutral amino acid residue is substituted with a different neutral amino acid residue, e.g. mutual substitution between a glycine residue and a serine residue), an amino acid sequence corresponding to a selected amino acid sequence with addition (insertion) or deletion of one or several (typically two or three) amino acid residues, and the like.

In this description, the term “polynucleotide” refers to a polymer (nucleic acids) in which several nucleotides are linked by phosphodiester bonds, but not limited by the number of nucleotides. As used herein, the term ‘polynucleotide’ encompasses DNA fragments and RNA fragments of various lengths.

The composition used in the method disclosed herein for inhibiting TNF-R2 expression comprises the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide as an active ingredient.

As described above, the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein can be perceived as a synthetic peptide that does not exist in nature in view that it is a synthetic peptide essentially consisting of an APP signal sequence or a modified APP signal sequence thereof.

Table 1 shows preferable examples of an APP signal sequence constituting the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein.

TABLE 1

No.	Amino acid sequence	Number of total amino acid residues
1	MLPGLALLLLAAWTARA (SEQ ID NO: 1)	17
2	MLPSLALLLLAAWTVRA (SEQ ID NO: 2)	17
3	MLPGLALVLLAAWTARA (SEQ ID NO: 3)	17
4	MLPSLALLLLTTWTARA (SEQ ID NO: 4)	17

Among these listed amino acid sequences, the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 is a human APP signal sequence. The amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 is a mouse APP signal sequence. The amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3 is a pig APP signal sequence. The amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4 is a guinea pig APP signal sequence.

In the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein, at least one amino acid residue is preferably amidated. Amidation of a carboxyl group in an amino acid residue (typically the C-terminal amino acid residue of the peptide chain) may increase the structural stability (e.g., protease resistance) of the synthetic peptide.

In the synthetic peptide used, the total number of amino acid residues constituting the peptide chain is suitably 50 or

fewer, desirably 30 or fewer, for instance, 25 or fewer (e.g. 20 or fewer, typically 17 or 18 to 20). The number of amino acid residues in an APP signal sequence is within such a range. A peptide consisting of an APP signal sequence or a modified APP signal sequence is preferably used in the method disclosed herein.

The TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein should just comprise, as an essential constituent (primary constituent), an APP signal sequence or a modified APP signal sequence. As long as the physiological activity of interest is not lost, the peptide may comprise other amino acid residue(s) besides the APP signal sequence or the modified APP signal sequence.

Such a short chain peptide can be easily prepared by chemical synthesis. Thus, the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide can be readily provided. Although no particular limitation is imposed on the conformation (spatial structure) of the peptide as long as the activity of interest is exhibited in the environment employed (in vitro or in vivo), a linear or a helical conformation is preferable from the standpoint of the less likelihood of becoming an immunogen (antigen), a preferable peptide has. A peptide having such a conformation is preferable also from the standpoint of the low susceptibility to epitope formation.

It is noted that in the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein, while all amino acid residues are preferably L-amino acids, some or all of the amino acid residues may be substituted with D-amino acids.

The synthetic peptide disclosed herein can be easily manufactured according to conventional chemical synthesis methodologies. For instance, any of conventional solid-phase and liquid-phase synthetic methods can be employed. A preferable solid-phase synthetic method uses Boc (t-butyloxycarbonyl) or Fmoc (9-fluorenylmethoxycarbonyl) as the protecting group for the amino group. For the synthetic peptide disclosed herein, a peptide chain having a desired amino acid sequence and a portion with modification (e.g., C-terminal amidation) can be synthesized by solid-phase synthesis using a commercial peptide synthesizer (which is, for instance, available from PerSeptive Biosystems, Applied Biosystems, etc.).

Alternatively, the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide may be biosynthesized based on genetic engineering techniques. In particular, a polynucleotide (typically a DNA strand) is synthesized so as to have a nucleotide sequence (including the ATG initiation codon) encoding the amino acid sequence of the desired peptide. Then, in accordance with the host cells, a recombinant vector is constructed so as to have an expression gene construct composed of the synthesized polynucleotide (DNA) and various regulatory elements (including promoters, ribosome binding sites, terminators, enhancers, and various cis-elements which control the expression level) to allow expression of the amino acid sequence within the host cells.

By an ordinary technique, this recombinant vector is inserted into prescribed host cells, and the host cells, or tissue or a mass containing these cells are cultured under specific conditions. In this way, the target TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide can be expressed and produced intracellularly.

The target TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide can be obtained by isolating the peptides from the host cells (from the culture medium if secreted) and purifying it. Methods hitherto used in the art may be directly employed without modification for constructing the recombinant vector and introducing the constructed recombinant vector into the host cell. Because such methods themselves are not distinctive to the present invention, detailed description is omitted.

For example, a fusion protein expression system may be employed to allow efficient large-scale production in host cells. In particular, a gene (DNA) coding for the amino acid sequence of the target TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide

is chemically synthesized, and the synthesized gene is introduced to a preferred site on a fusion protein expression vector (e.g. GST (glutathione S-transferase) fusion protein expression vectors such as the pET series available from Novagen as well as the pGEX series available from Amersham Bioscience). Host cells (typically, *Escherichia coli*) are then transformed by the vector. The resulting transformant is cultured to produce the target fusion protein. This protein is then extracted and purified. Subsequently, the purified fusion protein is cleaved with a specific enzyme (protease), and the liberated target peptide fragments (the designed TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide) are collected by a method such as affinity chromatography. The TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein can be produced by using such a fusion protein expression system heretofore known (e.g., the GST/His system available from Amersham Bioscience may be used).

Alternatively, the target peptide may be synthesized in vitro by constructing a template DNA for a cell-free protein synthesis system (i.e. a synthesized gene fragment having a nucleotide sequence that codes for the amino acid sequence of the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide), and employing a cell-free protein synthesis system with use of various compounds (e.g., ATP, RNA polymerase, amino acids, etc.) required for the peptide synthesis. For information concerning cell-free protein synthesis systems, reference may be made to, for example, Shimizu et al., *Nature Biotechnology*, 19, 751-755 (2001), and Madin et al., *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 97(2), 559-564 (2000). Based on the technology described in these articles, many corporations have been conducting contract manufacturing of peptides at the time when this application was filed. Also, wheat germ cell-free protein synthesis kits (such as PROTEIOS™ available from Toyobo Co., Ltd. of Japan) are commercially available.

By a heretofore known method, can be easily produced (synthesized) a single-stranded or double-stranded polynucleotide containing a nucleotide sequence encoding the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein and/or a nucleotide sequence complementary thereto. In other words, by selecting a codon corresponding to the respective amino acid residues constituting the designed amino acid sequence, a nucleotide sequence corresponding to the amino acid sequence of the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide can be easily determined and provided. Once the nucleotide sequence is determined, by utilizing a DNA synthesizer, etc., can be easily obtained a polynucleotide (single strand) corresponding to the desired nucleotide sequence. Furthermore, the target double-stranded DNA can be obtained by using the resulting single-stranded DNA as a template and employing various enzymatic synthetic methods (typically PCR).

The polynucleotide provided by the present invention may be in the form of DNA or RNA (mRNA, etc.). The DNA can be provided as a double strand or a single strand. When it is provided as a single strand, it may be a coding strand (sense strand) or an anticoding strand (anti-sense strand) complementary thereto.

The polynucleotide provided by the present invention can be used as a material for constructing a recombinant DNA (expression cassette) for producing the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide in various host cells or in a cell-free protein synthesis system.

The TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein can inhibit the expression of TNF-R2, by acting on target cells capable of expressing TNF-R2, such as central or peripheral nervous system cells, immune system cells, vascular cells and other cardiovascular system cells, retinal cells and other ocular cells and the like. Thus, it can be preferably used as an active ingredient in a composition (i.e. pharmaceutical composition) for decreasing the expression (presence) of TNF-R2, in other words, as a composition (phar-

maceutical composition) for reducing the relative presence of TNF-R2 compared to TNF-R1.

Such a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide may be in a salt form as far as the physiological activity is not impaired. For example, it is possible to use an acid salt of the peptide, which can be obtained by adding a commonly used inorganic or organic acid in accordance with an ordinary technique. Alternatively, it can be a different type of salt (e.g. a metal salt). The "synthetic peptide" in this description and in claims encompasses such salts.

The composition disclosed herein may contain various pharmaceutically (medically) acceptable carriers in accordance with the application form, as far as the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide as the active ingredient is maintained physiologically active. Carriers generally used as diluents or excipients in peptide medications are preferred. Although it may suitably vary depending on the intended purpose and application, typical examples include water, physiological buffers and various organic solvents. The carrier may be an aqueous alcohol (ethanol or the like) solution at an appropriate concentration, glycerol, or non-drying oil such as olive oil. Alternatively, it may be a liposome. Examples of secondary ingredients that may be contained in such a composition include various fillers, bulking agents, binders, wetting agents, surfactants, dyes, fragrances and the like.

Typical examples of the form of the composition disclosed herein include liquid formulas, suspensions, emulsions, aerosols, foams, granules, powders, tablets, capsules, ointments, aqueous gels and the like. For injection, etc., it may be formulated as a freeze-dried product or pellets to prepare a drug solution by dissolving it in saline or a suitable buffer (e.g., PBS) just prior to use.

The process itself of preparing a composition (drug) in various forms with the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide (primary ingredient) and various carriers (secondary ingredients) may be carried out in accordance with a heretofore known method. Because such a preparation process itself is not distinctive to the present invention, detailed description is omitted. The detail information regarding formulations can be found in, for example, *Comprehensive Medicinal Chemistry*, edited by Corwin Hansch and published by Pergamon Press (1990). The entire contents of this book are incorporated in this description by reference.

The target organ, tissue or site to which the present invention is applied is not particularly limited as long as there are cells capable of expressing TNF-R2 in the target. Preferable examples include cells (e.g. neurons, glial cells) of the central nervous system such as the brain and spinal cord or of the peripheral nervous system, immune system cells (e.g. various lymphocytes, macrophages, neutrophils, eosinophils, basophils, monocytes). The present invention can be applied to cells of the cardiovascular system including blood vessels (e.g. cardiac myocytes constituting the heart, vascular endothelial cells), retinal cells, and so on.

Alternatively, the present invention can be applied to carcinoma cells (tumor cells) in various cancers (tumors).

Alternatively, the present invention can be applied to stem cells including ES cells (embryonic stem cells), iPS cells (induced pluripotent stem cells), adipose stem cells, mesenchymal stem cells such as cartilage stem cells, hematopoietic stem cells, neural stem cells, and so on.

The TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide (or the composition comprising the peptide) disclosed herein can be used according to a method and dosage appropriate for the form and purpose.

For example, with respect to cells (a cell cluster), tissue or an organ under in vitro incubation, the peptide of interest can be supplied to a culture medium containing the target cultured cells (cultured tissue or organ). Its amount and the number of portions to be added are not particularly limited as they may vary in accordance with the conditions such as

the type of cultured product, cell density (initial cell density at the incubation start), passage number, incubation conditions, type of culture medium, etc. When human or non-human mammalian cells, tissue and the like are cultured, it can be added in one to several portions so that the concentration of the peptide in the culture medium is within a range of about 0.1 μM to 100 μM or more preferably within a range of 0.5 μM to 20 μM (e.g., 1 μM to 10 μM).

By supplying the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein to an in vitro culture system, the expression of TNF-R2 can be inhibited in the culture system, whereby the relative presence of TNF-R2 compared to TNF-R1 can be reduced.

Examples of preferable mammals to which the present is applied include rodents such as mice, rats, guinea pigs, etc.; odd-toed ungulates such as horses, donkeys, etc.; even-toed ungulates such as pigs, cows, etc.; primates (excluding humans) such as chimpanzees, orangutans, crab-eating monkeys, etc.; and the like.

Alternatively, in order to inhibit TNF-R2 expression to reduce the relative presence of TNF-R2 compared to TNF-R1 in a prescribed organ, tissue or site (or a tissue fragment or cell cluster transplanted in a prescribed site) in vivo, a suitable amount of a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide can be prepared into a liquid formula and administered in a desirable amount to the patient (i.e. in vivo) by intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous, intradermal, or intraperitoneal injection.

Alternatively, it can be administered directly to the prescribed tissue (i.e., cells constituting the tissue) in a solid form such as tablets, etc., in a gel form such as ointment, etc., or in an aqueous gel form. The amount and the number of portions to be added are not particularly limited as they may vary depending on conditions such as the type of cells subjected to balance adjustment for their presence, the site, organ or tissue where the cells are present, etc.

Several worked examples related to the present invention are described below while these examples are not intended to limit the scope of the invention.

EXAMPLE 1

Peptide Synthesis

Using the peptide synthesizer described later, were prepared a synthetic peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 shown in Table 1 above and a synthetic peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2. In the description below, the two synthetic peptides in total are referred to as Sample 1 and Sample 2 corresponding to their SEQ ID NOS. These are chemically synthesized linear peptides each formed of a total of 17 amino acid residues. Each peptide was synthesized by carrying out solid-phase synthesis (Fmoc chemistry), operating a commercial peptide synthesizer (an Intavis AG system) in accordance with the operation manual. Because the mode of using the peptide synthesizer itself is not distinctive to the present invention, detailed description is omitted. Each synthetic peptide was dissolved in DMSO and diluted with PBS (phosphate buffered saline) to prepare a 1 mM stock solution.

EXAMPLE 2

Test of Each Synthetic Peptide for TNF-R2 Expression-Inhibiting Activity with Cell Line of Mouse Origin

The activities of the two peptides synthesized in Example 1 above were tested with cultured cells of a mouse spinal

cord, neuroblastoma cell line (Neuro 2a). The control group was supplied with no peptides. The test details are described below.

The Neuro 2a cell line was seeded in a culture dish of 6 cm diameter at a density of 8.5×10^4 cells/mL and incubated overnight in a general DMEM culture medium (with 10% FBS, 1% penicillin) at 37° C. in a CO₂ incubator at 5% CO₂.

After incubated overnight, the culture medium was replaced with a DMEM culture medium containing 2% FBS, 20 μM retinoic acid and 1% penicillin. Incubation was carried on for seven days under the same conditions to effect retinoic acid induction. Subsequently, the culture medium was replaced with a DMEM culture medium containing the peptide of Sample 1 or Sample 2 in an amount equivalent to 5 μM , in addition to 2% FBS, 20 μM retinoic acid and 1% penicillin (also containing 12.5 μL of DMSO at this point). Incubation was carried on under the same conditions for two days. The control group (group supplied with no peptide) was incubated for two days in a DMEM culture medium (with 2% FBS, 20 μM retinoic acid, 1% penicillin) supplied only with the aforementioned amount of DMSO, without any peptide.

After completion of the incubation, cultured cells in each test group were collected and divided into certain test tubes in fractions having the same number of cells. By the immunofluorescence technique described below, the expression (presence) of TNF-R1 and TNF-R2 was then assessed in each test group (group supplied with no peptide, group supplied with Sample 1, group supplied with Sample 2).

More specifically, in each test group, for the TNF-R2 measurement, an anti-TNF-R2 goat polyclonal antibody (a Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc. product, SC-1074) was added to the respective test tubes to a final concentration of 4×10^{-3} mg/mL and incubation was carried out at 37° C. for a prescribed time period. As a secondary antibody, a donkey anti-goat IgG antibody (an Invitrogen product, A11055) labeled with a fluorescent dye (Alexa® 488) was added to the test tubes to a final concentration of 4×10^{-3} mg/mL and incubation was carried out at 37° C. for a prescribed time period.

On the other hand, as for the TNF-R1 measurement, an anti-TNF-R1 rabbit polyclonal antibody (a Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc. product, SC-7895) was added to the respective test tubes to a final concentration of 4×10^{-3} mg/mL and incubation was carried out at 37° C. for a prescribed time period. As a secondary antibody, a goat anti-rabbit IgG antibody (an Invitrogen product, A11034) labeled with a fluorescent dye (Alexa® 488) was added to the test tubes to a final concentration of 2×10^{-3} mg/mL and incubation was carried out at 37° C. for a prescribed time period.

The fluorescence intensities of cells were measured with a flow cytometer (a Millipore system product, Guava® easyCyte 8HT). The results are shown in FIG. 1. For both TNF-R2 and TNF-R1, the fluorescence intensities are shown as relative values with the fluorescence intensities of TNF-R2 and TNF-R1 in the control group (group supplied with no peptide) being 1, respectively.

As shown in FIG. 1, when either Sample 1 or Sample 2 was supplied to the cultured cells of mouse origin, the presence (expression) of TNF-R2 significantly decreased as compared with the control group. This indicates that each synthetic peptide synthesized as Sample 1 or Sample 2 is highly active as a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide.

On the other hand, irrespective of whether Sample 1 or Sample 2 was supplied to the cultured mouse cells, no significant change was observed in the presence (expression) of TNF-R1 as compared with the control group (the expres-

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sion of TNF-R1 slightly increased as compared with the control group). Accordingly, by using a synthetic peptide essentially consisting of an APP signal sequence such as Sample 1 or Sample 2, the expression of TNF-R2 can be inhibited in a target organ, tissue or site (microscopically, in cells present in the organ, tissue or site), and also the relative presence of TNF-R2 can be decreased, compared to TNF-R1.

EXAMPLE 3

Test of Each Synthetic Peptide for TNF-R2
Expression-Inhibiting Activity with Cell Line of
Human Origin

The activities of the two peptides synthesized in Example 1 above were tested with cultured cells of a human neuroblastoma cell line (SK-N-SH). The control group was supplied with no peptides. The test details are described below.

The SK-N-SH cell line was seeded in a 4 mL fraction in a culture dish of 6 cm diameter at a density of 1.5×10^5 cells/mL and incubated in a general DMEM culture medium (with 10% FBS, 2 mM L-glutamine, 50 unit/mL penicillin, and 50 μ g/mL streptomycin) at 37° C. in a CO₂ incubator at 5% CO₂ over two nights.

After incubated over two nights, the culture medium was replaced with a DMEM culture medium with 2% FBS, 2 mM L-glutamine, 20 μ M retinoic acid, 50 unit/mL penicillin, and 50 μ g/mL streptomycin. Incubation was carried on for five days under the same conditions to effect retinoic acid induction. Subsequently, the culture medium was replaced with a DMEM culture medium containing the peptide of Sample 1 or Sample 2 in an amount equivalent to 5 μ M, in addition to 2% FBS, 2 mM L-glutamine, 20 μ M retinoic acid, 50 unit/mL penicillin and 50 μ g/mL streptomycin (also containing 5 μ L of DMSO at this point). Incubation was carried on under the same conditions for two days. The control group (group supplied with no peptide) was incubated for two days in a DMEM culture medium (with 2% FBS, 2 mM L-glutamine, 20 μ M retinoic acid, 50 unit/mL penicillin, and 50 μ g/mL streptomycin) supplied only with the aforementioned amount of DMSO, without any added peptide.

After completion of the incubation, cultured cells in each test group were collected and divided into certain test tubes in fractions having the same number of number of cells. By the immunofluorescence technique described below, the expression (presence) of TNF-R1 and TNF-R2 was then assessed in each test group (group supplied with no peptide, group supplied with Sample 1, group supplied with Sample 2).

More specifically, in each test group, for the TNF-R2 measurement, the respective test tubes were supplemented with an anti-TNF-R2 goat polyclonal antibody (a Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc. product, SC-1074) to a final concentration of 4×10^{-3} mg/mL and were left standing still on ice for a prescribed time period. As for a secondary antibody, the test tubes were supplemented with a donkey anti-goat IgG antibody (an Invitrogen product, A21447) labeled with a fluorescent dye (Alexa® 647) to a final concentration of 4×10^{-3} mg/mL and were left standing still on ice for a prescribed time period.

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On the other hand, as for the TNF-R1 measurement, the respective test tubes were supplemented with an anti-TNF-R1 mouse monoclonal antibody (a Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc. product, SC-52739) to a final concentration of 2×10^{-3} mg/mL and were left standing still on ice for a prescribed time period. As for a secondary antibody, the test tubes were supplemented with a goat anti-mouse IgG antibody (an Invitrogen product, A10029) labeled with a fluorescent dye (Alexa® 488) at a final concentration of 4×10^{-3} mg/mL and were left standing still on ice for a prescribed time period for incubation.

The fluorescence intensities of cells were measured with a flow cytometer (a Millipore system product, Guava® easyCyte 8HT). The results are shown in FIG. 2. For both TNF-R2 and TNF-R1, the fluorescence intensities are shown as relative values with the fluorescence intensities of TNF-R2 and TNF-R1 in the control group (group supplied with no peptide) being 1, respectively.

As shown in FIG. 2, when either Sample 1 or Sample 2 was supplied to the cultured cells of human origin, the presence (expression) of TNF-R2 significantly decreased as compared with the control group. This indicates that each synthetic peptide synthesized as Sample 1 or Sample 2 is highly active as a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide.

On the other hand, irrespective of whether Sample 1 or Sample 2 was supplied to the cultured human cells, no significant change was observed in the presence (expression) of TNF-R1 as compared with the control group (the expression of TNF-R1 slightly increased as compared with the control group). Accordingly, by using a synthetic peptide essentially consisting of an APP signal sequence such as Sample 1 or Sample 2, the expression of TNF-R2 can be inhibited in a target organ, tissue or site (microscopically, in cells present in the organ, tissue or site), and also the relative presence of TNF-R2 can be decreased, compared to TNF-R1.

EXAMPLE 4

Preparation of Granular Formulation

50 mg of the synthetic peptide (a TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide), 50 mg of a crystalline cellulose and 400 mg of lactose were mixed. The mixture was kneaded with 1 mL of an ethanol and water mixture. The kneaded mixture was granulated by a conventional method to obtain a granular formulation (granular composition) comprising the TNF-R2 expression-inhibiting peptide disclosed herein as the primary ingredient.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

As described above, according to the present invention, the expression of TNF-R1 and TNF-R2 can be inhibited in cells present in a target organ, tissue or site. Accordingly, the present invention can contribute to treat or improve various TNF-mediated diseases and lesions, influenced by a relatively high expression (presence) of TNF-R2 or of a relatively high relative presence of TNF-R2 compared to TNF-R1. The present invention can be preferably implemented also in research and development in fields aimed to improve diseases (disorders) mediated by TNF-R2.

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TG13-006 PCT ST25.txt

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The invention claimed is:

1. A method for producing cells having a reduced relative presence of TNF-R2 compared to TNF-R1, the method comprising:

culturing cells capable of expressing a TNF-R2 in a culture medium,

supplying an artificially synthesized peptide essentially consisting of the amino acid sequence constituting an entire signal peptide of an amyloid precursor protein (APP) to the medium in which the cells are being cultured,

further culturing the cells in the medium containing the artificially synthesized peptide to inhibit expression of TNF-R2 in the cells, and

assessing expression of TNF-R2 in the cells.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising collecting the cells after the step of further culturing.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the amino acid sequence constituting the signal peptide of the amyloid precursor protein is:

MLPGLALLLLAAWTARA, (SEQ ID NO: 1)

MLPSLALLLLAAWTVRA, (SEQ ID NO: 2)

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-continued

(SEQ ID NO: 3)
MLPGLALVLLAAWTARA,
or
5
(SEQ ID NO: 4)
MLPSLALLLLTTWTARA.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the amino acid sequence constituting the signal peptide of the amyloid precursor protein is

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(SEQ ID NO: 3)
MLPGLALVLLAAWTARA,
or
(SEQ ID NO: 4)
MLPSLALLLLTTWTARA.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the cells are human or other mammalian nervous system cells.

10 6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the cells are human or other mammalian retinal cells or other ocular cells.

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